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# Oregon Public Employees powers to 6.3% return on strength of private equity

By ARLEEN JACOBIOUS  



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The Oregon Capitol in Salem.

**VIEW KEY DATA:**

**Oregon Public  
Employees  
Retirement Fund**

**Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund**, Salem, earned a net 6.3% return for the fiscal year ended June 30, outpacing its -0.7% benchmark, according to reports to the Oregon Investment Council, which oversees the \$93.3 billion pension fund.

Oregon PERF's return comes amid a fiscal year when most of its public pension fund peers have posted negative returns.

The pension fund returned an annualized net 10.3% for the three years ended June 30 relative to a benchmark of 8.9%; 9.3% for five years, above its 8.6% benchmark; and 9.3% for 10 years vs. its 9.2% benchmark.

By comparison, the pension fund returned 25.5% on its investments for the year ended June 30, 2021.

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The pension plan has a 6.9% assumed rate of return. The OPERF board is expected to review its assumed rate of return next summer.

The best-performing asset class in the current fiscal year was real estate with net 29.6% return, above its 27.2% benchmark; followed by private equity at 24% (15.2% benchmark); real assets, 23% (13.1%) ; diversifying strategies, 17.1% (0.1%) ; opportunity portfolio, 10% (14.5%); cash, -0.8% (0.2%); fixed income, -9.1% (-10.1%) ; risk parity, -13% (-6.7%); and public equity, -13.3% (-16.5%).

Paola Nealon, managing principal at the council's general investment consultant, [Meketa Investment Group](#), told the council Wednesday that one of the reasons for the pension fund's "very strong numbers" for the fiscal year was due to its 8-percentage-point overweight in private equity.

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As of June 30, OPERF had an actual allocation of 28% private equity, 21.9% public equity, 16.6% fixed income, 13.6% real estate, 7.9% real assets, 4.9% diversifying assets, 2.6% opportunity portfolio, 2.5% cash and 2% risk parity.

The pension plan's target allocation is 30% public equity, 20% private equity, 20% fixed income, 12.5% real estate, 7.5% real assets, 7.5% diversifying strategies, 2.5% risk parity, and zero each to opportunity portfolio and cash.

Allan Emkin, also a Meketa managing principal, noted that the outperformance was due to "significant bets" that hadn't paid off for a long time that did pay off.

"We don't know if they will pay off in the future," Mr. Emkin said.

Separately, the council is in the midst of an asset-liability study, and the council is expected to review recommended alternative portfolios in October.

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